2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8



one feels any grudge against society. There is small temptation to theft. There are, therefore, no questions of capital and labour, no leisure class, no organized industries, no exploitation either of men or of raw materials, no banks to rob, no checks to forge. Under such conditions economic crimes are practically eliminated. Man lives off the jungle and the streams which intersect it, and there are at his disposal uncounted miles of stream and of jungle. Such crimes as exist among the human inhabitants of these forests arise chiefly in quarrels over women. But where divorce is free and instantaneous, and sexual relationships are taken lightly, even the difficulties between men and women are enormously simplified.

And as these Djukas stood curiously staring outside the prison gates of St. Laurent, they seemed to me to stand in judgment. When I watched them get into their canoes and paddle upstream, returning to their green jungle fastnesses, and heard them call to one another from canoe to canoe, and heard their laughter ring out across the sunlit water, I felt that they went back to the forest, well content that their slave ancestors of two hundred years ago had fled from the white man and all his ways, back to the jungle, there to lead the primitive life of their African forbears.

I had gone to French Guiana to study the convict life of the Devil's Island Penal Colony. And when that had been completed, my husband and I made a journey through the interior of Dutch Guiana, travelling by the streams and trails used by fugitives from the French prisons. This is how we

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8



768 Upon the father's decease, his property does not descend to his children, but reverts to his wives, sisters, mother, or brothers. As the wives may be living in different villages, each wife inherits only that property which happens to be in her village. If the man has no wife in a certain village where there are maternal relatives, they inherit all his property within that village. This pertains more to personal than to real property, as the latter tends to be communally held.

648 One thing more must be said regarding the sex life of the 833 Djukas. The white men seldom receive overtures from Bush Negro women. It is, of course, taboo for Djuka women to have intercourse with white men, Indians, Town Negroes, balata bleeders, or anyone except her own tribesmen, among whom she is promiscuous. One Djuka woman, running her hand over the skin of a white arm and shoulder, shuddered in repulsion. When asked why, she said that she did not care for white-skinned men. We, however, were marked out for special feminine favour. We received from a woman the gift [431] of a bracelet of delicately filed iron wire, because, as she said, our eyes put her in mind of those of her dead husband.

/179 cont./

765 431 [606] Before coming out of mourning, the widow must procure for herself at the minimum the money necessary for a demijohn of tafia as a contribution to the festival of the lifting of mourning. She must make a present of several cans of couac to her husband's mother.

765 843 184 A pregnant woman undergoes mourning exactly according to the general law. The custom described by several authors for the Saramaka, according to which the pregnant woman must join one of her husband's "brothers," does not apply to the Boni.

765 888 [768] [602] There are some attenuations of the harshness of mourning with respect to old women. For example in 1956, Lémiki (70 years), living in Boniville, was in mourning for her husband Tabiki (Awara Bakka, but residing since childhood with the Lapé lineage in Loka /180/ where he had been raised by his father). Lémiki alternately spent three weeks in her house and three in her husband's. It was Asamani, Tabiki's sister by the same father, who exercised authority over her.

765 768 [613] This remarkable example shows that as regards mourning (rights and duties), the principle of residence plays an essential role. He who has been reared by his father is in this respect taken out of his lineage, which loses all rights and all control over the conduct of the mourning.

765 [705] The co-wives of a widower are subject to mourning on the same grounds as he, and for the same motive, since they are targets for the jealousy of the dead woman's yɔrka.

[768] However, they are authorized most often to live with their maternal family. When the period of dipi baaka has ended,

765 833 [613] they may take up conjugal relations again with their husband, but at intervals of several weeks and without his being able to spend the night with one of them. Each time he must ask permission of the head of the dead woman's lineage.